

MEMO

DATE: August 11, 2004
TO: Energy and Environment Committee
FROM: Ashwani Vasishth, (213) 236-1908
RE: Regional Comprehensive Plan Development

Recommended Action:

For information only.

Summary:

The Regional Council has directed the preparation of a new Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP), following from the SCAG Strategic Plan and pursuant to the current OWP. Staff has initiated the preliminary process of developing the RCP, which is intended as a vehicle to support region-wide implementation of policies and recommendations deriving from SCAG's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the Southern California Compass growth visioning process.

A Preliminary Work Plan and Concept document is appended below.

Background:

The purpose of the RCP is to implement and promote policy objectives of the Regional Council, fulfill the new organizational Strategic Plan, and serve to assist outside parties in working within regional plans. As such, the Regional Comprehensive Plan utilizes SCAG's other, on-going planning efforts, notably, the RTP along with the RTP Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), the Regional Transportation Improvement Program, and the Southern California Compass.

The RCP serves to consolidate and translate these efforts to promote external, independent action within the region. The RCP is also the primary tool for implementing mitigation measures identified in the RTP PEIR. The RCP effort for 2004-05 will produce a draft plan and its subsequent public participation process, with adoption of final plan anticipated for FY 2005-06.

Fiscal Impact:

The staff resources necessary to support the development of the Regional Comprehensive Plan are contained within SCAG's Fiscal Year 2004-05 Budget.

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
2004-2005 REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
CONCEPT AND PRELIMINARY WORK PLAN
DISCUSSION DRAFT**

Purpose:

The Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide (RCPG) promotes policy objectives of the Regional Council, fulfills and implements the new organizational Strategic Plan, and serves to assist outside parties in implementing regional plans. As such, the Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide is an extension of SCAG's other, on-going planning efforts, notably, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) along with the RTP Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), Regional Transportation Improvement Plan, and Southern California COMPASS. The RCPG serves to consolidate and translate those efforts to promote external, independent action.

Features of the Plan

- **Comprehensive:**
The RCPG, as noted above, is primarily intended as a guide for local governments and other external entities in interpreting and implementing other regional plans and policy objectives. As such, it focuses on areas of SCAG responsibility as defined by Federal and State law, including transportation planning, air quality, housing, and growth. A chapter is dedicated to each of these areas. However, in recognition of the inter-connected-ness of planning disciplines, and with an eye toward outcomes, the RCPG treats all issues related to the region's overall well-being. As such, chapters are dedicated to such issues as the economy, resource management as well as other (tbd).
- **Action Oriented**
The RCPG will describe conditions and objectives around each issue. However, the major focus of each chapter will be on specific actions for specific identified stakeholders. The RCPG will be the primary tool for implementing mitigation measures committed by SCAG in the RTP PEIR. Further, the RCPG will create definitions and delineate thresholds for SCAG's Inter-Governmental Review efforts.
- **Advisory**
SCAG is a voluntary member organization comprised of local governments, and creates a forum with the ability to affect policy and practice of outside parties. As such, the RCPG is intended to be an advisory document that clearly lays out steps that local governments and others can choose to take in support of regional objectives. The decision to pursue such objectives belongs solely to the independent actor. That said, SCAG will work proactively to demonstrate the benefits of pursuing the objectives identified in the plan.
- **Long Range**
The RCPG is intended to work as a companion piece to other planning efforts around the region and state. Though the RCPG is updated by SCAG periodically (approximately 3-5 years), the plan itself will discuss long term actions and outcomes for the region. At a minimum, the RCPG will feature the same 25-year planning horizon featured in the RTP. At the same time, the plan will discuss shorter term goals and objectives analogous to the horizons in the RTIP.
- **Measurable, Follow-up activities**
In addition to recommending specific actions, the RCPG will set specific targets both for external action in support of the plan, and for measurable effect on the welfare of the region. Future RCPG will track progress on meeting targets.

- **Format**
As described above, and similar to previous RCPG, the plan will contain a chapter each devoted to identified issue areas. These areas will include transportation, environment, growth/land-use, and housing (exact titles tbd). Other areas will be added based on future discussion. Each chapter will contain a like format which will include a description of a specific regional policy objective(s) current conditions, a discussion of potential approaches, and recommended actions for specified stakeholders.

Preparation

- **Policy Guidance**
As noted above, the RCPG serves to advance policy objectives as determined by the Regional Council and featured in other SCAG plans. Particularly of note, the Southern California COMPASS (Growth Visioning) project features several specific recommendations for local governments aimed at improving land-use and urban form in the region and building efficiencies in the transportation system. The 2005 RCPG will contain special emphasis on local implementation actions that emerge from the COMPASS program. The overall policy objectives of the RCPG will be approved by the Regional Council prior to plan drafting.
- **Cooperative Approach**
As the RCPG is intended to facilitate action by outside parties, the process for developing the plan must be open and participatory. The Regional Council will set and determine the policy objectives upon which the plan will be based. In addition, SCAG proposes to involve local and other levels of government, private industry groups, residents and other stakeholders in the development of the plan. SCAG will utilize various on-going public outreach and involvement efforts to this end, but may also form a single purpose, ad-hoc advisory group for this purpose.
- **Staff**
Each chapter will have an identified lead staff and support staff. The chapter leads will form a core team for the plan, and will meet periodically to guide progress on the plan. Jacob Lieb is the project manager, and will lead this effort to its conclusion, along with writing the introduction and executive summary.
- **Environmental Impact Report**
At this time, staff believes that 2004 RTP PEIR will be largely or entirely sufficient to cover actions described in the RCPG for which SCAG has authority. However, it may be desirable to prepare an additional EIR, albeit with a limited scope. Discussions on this should proceed promptly, and we should reach a decision by April 2004.
- **Timelines**
Drafting of some chapters, based on assignment in 2003-04 Work Programs, will proceed prior to July 2004. Otherwise, plan milestones and progress will be as follows:
 1. Policy Committee, public dialogue on policy objectives
July-Sept. 2004
 2. Regional Council sign-off on project plan, policy objectives
Sept. 2004
 3. Drafting
Sept-Dec. 2004
 4. Policy Committee, public review process
Jan-June 2005
 5. Adoption
Summer of fall 2005